



The **Apiarist**

... High Weald Beekeepers' Newsletter

Wings & things: Chair's Update

By Roxanne Gould



So far, this year has been unusual and continually tests us as beekeepers. I have had colonies who have gone through their

stores quicker than it comes in, due to the unseasonably dry weather leading to a drought and the start of the June gap, which seems to vary in length each year. I have had to feed the odd split and have chosen not to take a Spring crop which is a first for me.

The changes in the rural countryside and the crops which the farmer chooses to sow effects my apiaries differently year on year, with large scale farming, and the choices they make, being fascinating to compare each year and analyse. People often think rural = lots of honey, and it's really a very different picture. For example, we have had a smaller OSR planting which resulted in much smaller yields (although that's probably been eaten now).

The weather also plays a huge part in what is available for the bees to forage on, and it is fitting that I started writing this piece before the heatwave at the end of June, which was another unexpected development to contend with. Early on in the season, I commented that there was hazel catkins producing pollen over the Christmas period, and it finished earlier than last year. Similarly, the brambles have flowered unusually

early, and now summer has arrived in full force. The Flow is now in motion and the bees are busy collecting nectar and working hard to keep the brood nest temperatures stable. With the variation of high temperatures over the summer, I often wonder about the foraging capability of the bees whilst they try to maintain thermal regulation and the impact it will have on them.

The environmental stresses which we have experienced so far this season has made me consider the effect this also has on the bees health, especially if they have not been able to get out, forage for pollen effectively, and the lack of nectar. Feeding fondant is a great way that I can help, but what else are the bees missing out on nutritionally, and how will this affect them over the season?

As I progress with beekeeping and hone my skills, I am also branching out and practicing rearing queens using queen cells, Apideas and incubators, rather than leaving them in the hive and hoping that I can harvest the cells before they potentially cast swarm. I have had some successes and some failures – humidity is important and I now keep a closer eye on the water levels. Overall, I have been impressed with the results and am waiting to see how these queens perform out in the field. Next year my aim is to graft and develop further.

One of my main hopes for my time as Chair is to engage the wider High Weald membership and I would love to hear about your experiences so far this season. What have been your highs and what have been your lows, what has surprised you and what

IN THIS ISSUE

Chair's Update	1
A beekeeping journey	2
How and why I became a beekeeper	3
A new cool bee app	3
From High Weald to Uganda	4
The HWBKA Apiary Co-operative and EFB	7
The Bees in the Chimney – part 3	9
Calendar	10
The HWBKA committee	11

have been your lessons taken home so far? How else can I as Chairperson and the wider committee support your beekeeping experience and skill building.

I am available on the.
hwbka+chair@gmail.com, I look forward to hearing from you.



The Apiarist is a quarterly newsletter from the High Weald Beekeepers' Association.

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A beekeeping Journey

By Peter Halford



Some of you may remember reports of a terrible tragedy near Nutley some years ago, when four horses died as a result of honeybees (a link to a BBC article about this [here](#)). A cousin of mine owned one of the horses and, understandably, gave up beekeeping afterwards. A couple of years later, when she heard that I had retired early and knew I had been interested in her bees, she gave me her two WBC hives.

It was January 2015, which gave me a few months to research what might be involved before getting my first bees. I knew there was a local beekeeper near my home in Witherenden Hill, as I had often seen his hives down by the River Rother, so I got in touch. He kindly lent me his copy of *Beekeeping at Buckfast Abbey*, and I was immediately hooked.

I joined the HWBKA and signed up for Keith Obbard's course, which was due to begin that March. I ordered a nuc from Paynes for late May and also put my name on the swarm list. From that point on, I was on a beekeeping rollercoaster: the more I learned, the more I realised there was still more to learn. I read, watched videos, absorbed everything I could from the course, and listened closely at Bee Banters.

Then, in May, Sam Bowles, who was HWBKA Treasurer at the time, called

to say she had collected a swarm from Batemans and knew I was on the list. I gladly accepted the colony and took them home, only to discover a week or so later that the queen may well have been one of Sam's own. She lived close to Batemans and used to mark her queens white. My newly gifted queen was white too which would normally have indicated a five-year-old queen under the colour convention, that seemed highly unlikely. A week later my Paynes nuc arrived, and suddenly I had two colonies. By the end of the season I was proudly telling friends and family that I was now a beekeeper, and I could prove it by handing them a jar of honey.

Learning Fast

At the 2015 AGM, Brian Hopper announced that he was giving up the role of Association Swarm Collector and asked anyone interested to get in touch. I had a quick chat with him about how much time might be involved. I must have misheard his answer, because I volunteered, despite never having seen a swarm except on YouTube and certainly never having collected one.

In those days there was no Swarm WhatsApp group. I would take a swarm call, then try to find someone to collect it or, failing that, go myself and later offer the bees to another HWBKA member on the swarm list. My first collection was at Ticehurst Primary School. Although all the children had gone home, several teachers were still there watching. It

all went smoothly, and that was the first of many that year — about a dozen in total, including three in a single day one weekend.

Serving the Association

John Preston, then Secretary, persuaded me to stand for his position when he had to step down from the committee, and I was duly voted in at the 2016 AGM — uncontested, which came as no surprise!

After serving the maximum three-year term as Honorary Secretary, I stepped down in 2019 but continued as Membership Secretary, a role I still hold today.

Beekeeping Today

Over those ten years, my beekeeping has not changed dramatically, but it has certainly evolved. I now use 14x12 National brood boxes in WBC "skins" (called "lifts", an extra outer wall of the hive – editorial note), complete with floor, roof, and lifts. If colonies are strong enough, I use shook swarm as part of my effort to reduce reliance on chemical varroacides, although I am not completely averse to treatment if mite counts are high. I would love to say I had found the holy grail of living with varroa, but like the real thing, I suspect it will never be found.

What I have found, though, is a fascinating and rewarding way to spend my retirement, supported throughout by a friendly, knowledgeable, and generous association.



Cartoon chosen by Peter Halford to help illustrate this article.

How and why I became a beekeeper

By Liz Missen



I am so pleased to be able to give something back to the Association by being on the committee this year and helping in whatever way I can.

My beekeeping journey started with a chance conversation with a neighbouring allotment holder about food security, pollinators and climate change. Not a man to waste time, Al mobilised Crowborough Town Council to build an apiary – he/me were going to take action and save bees. I had young children and very little free time but was swept along with the 'saving bees' narrative.

The bees arrived in spring 2010 and, in my new bee suit, I observed inspections and was captivated. I was

there the first time Al was stung – and he had a strong reaction to it. I fumbled for my new hive tool to scrape off the sting and the blade sliced my wrist. So, while he was having an allergic reaction he was also trying to stem the bleeding from my wrist! We both found that incident very funny afterwards – like a bad comedy – but it was a warning and in the autumn he had a serious anaphylactic episode and was hospitalised. Thankfully he survived. He never went near the bees again and his colonies and hives became mine. But I knew almost nothing about bees.

Incredibly, the bees survived the winter and by spring I realised that reading bee books wasn't enough. I signed up to the HWBKA beekeeping course run by Keith Obbard. It was a bee life saver and my bees are the descendants of Al's bees, sixteen years later. The laughter and learning

I have enjoyed over the years with the HWBKA members has made beekeeping a journey full of wonder. Skip making courses, talking to the public on the HWBKA stalls, learning how to make creamed honey – no whisking involved! Beekeeper is too narrow a name for what it really covers – hive, frame and shed builder, weather watcher, bee doctor, weight lifter of honey supers, and honey seller. And of course, just gazing into the hives and understanding more of what once seemed aimless scurrying bees and having the knowledge and courage to act if required.

Sixteen years seems a long time to keep bees but it is only 16 'goes' at the bee keeping year and each one is so different from the last. I love that we are like the bees... with a hive mind, sharing information and helping each other support our bees. HWBKA is a super group of people very much committed to saving the bees. 

Cool new bee app

By Paul Lindström

In one of her latest blog posts Ann Chilcott made a review of a new app for beekeepers called "Apiary Forecast" by John Richardson. You can read the whole review on "The Beelistener" [here](#).

I was so intrigued about how the app was designed so I signed up for it. If you are quick you will get the introduction offer and only pay £25 per year, or you can try it for free for a while.

It looks to me to be well thought through and should be a good help to judge if it is a good day for an inspection, if there is indications that the swarm season has started and if the nectar flow is on or off in your area.

I will use it regularly for a period of time and might come back with a more in-depth review later. 

The screenshot shows the 'Apiary Forecast: Inspection Outlook' app interface. At the top, it says 'Bright and settled' and 'South East England - Battle weather - Fri 26 Jun 2026'. Below this are tabs for 'Forecast tools', 'Swarm Outlook', 'Inspection Outlook' (which is selected), 'Forage Outlook', and 'Forecast Location'. The main content area has a header 'TODAY'S BEE-WEATHER INSIGHT' and a sub-header 'A usable weather window is an opportunity.' It then states: 'Inspection suitability tells you whether the weather supports opening a colony. The reason for opening still needs to come from the colony.' Below this is a section titled 'Apiary Forecast: Inspection Outlook' with a sub-header 'Summer inspection context' and a note: 'Full inspections are more realistic in warm, bright and calm windows, provided there is a real reason to open the colony.' A 'Score key' section follows, with four categories: 'Avoid 0-29' (Do not open unless there is a genuine welfare need), 'Welfare 30-49' (Non-brood welfare task only. Feed top-up is okay if needed, provided the brood nest is not exposed), 'Limited 50-69' (Brood-nest work should be brief and purposeful if needed. Know what you are checking before you open, work efficiently, and close up promptly), and 'Normal 70-100' (Routine inspection may be reasonable if the colony needs it and conditions at the apiary match the forecast). At the bottom, there is a '16-day inspection overview' section with a note: 'A quick scan of the forecast. Click the date for the full day card.' It then says: 'Overall: Several windows are shaped by extensive cloud, with some brighter spells and falling pressure may bring foragers back sooner and make colonies less settled. Use the table as a quick scan, then open the full day before planning work.'

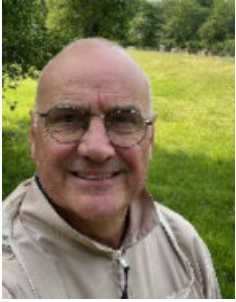
This is the first tab in "Apiary Forecast" – Inspection Outlook. The app is connected to several databases and you can pinpoint where your apiary is situated to get an accurate forecast of both weather on crops locally.

The second tab is called "Swarm Outlook", and as the name suggests here you will get info on how likely the bees in your apiary are to be swarming right now.

The third tab is called "Forage Outlook" and will give you info on how the forage is at the moment, and help you decide whether the bees might need to be fed or not.

From the High Weald to Uganda

By Mark Wilcox



I have become involved with the Bees Abroad charity over the last year and thought that members would be interested in my path from the High Weald

to the lower slopes of the South Rwenzori Mountains in western Uganda.

In April 2025 I attended a lecture at the Hall of the Worshipful Company of Wax Chandlers in London and heard about the work of [Bees Abroad \(BA\)](#). This is a charity that aims to help communities to build sustainable livelihoods through beekeeping. At any one time they are supporting about 50 projects in 7 countries across Africa and to date they have facilitated the training of more than 6,000 beekeepers. I was impressed by the commitment of the volunteers involved and the real, long-term difference that can be made with relatively small amounts of money. At that event, I spoke to Richard and Jane Ridler who are both Master Beekeepers and have been instrumental in the development of BA across Africa, but especially in Uganda. They needed some help in the management of projects in South

West Uganda and took me on board.

It was clear that a knowledge of beekeeping was valuable but by no means essential. Low cost, low intervention, practical beekeeping in remote areas of Uganda is very different to our usual practice in the High Weald.

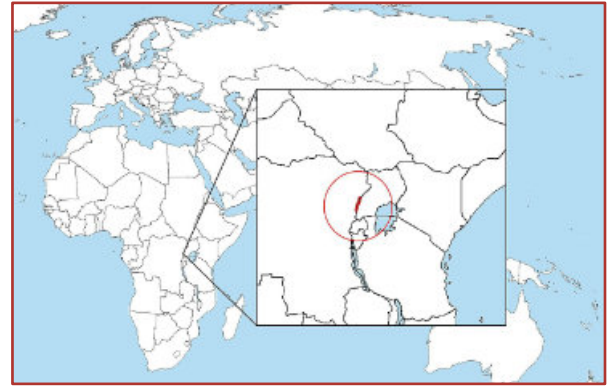
The East African lowland honey bee, *apis mellifera scutellata*, is also a different beast!

Traditional beekeeping was formally in tube-like woven hives which could only be opened from the rear end and not properly inspected. Honey is harvested by introducing your arm and grabbing the available comb before re-closing. Not something that I'd fancy doing. Modern beekeeping has moved to the adoption of Kenyan Top Bar (KTB) Hives that are made of local wood that can be inspected and therefore managed.

Working "hands on"

During the latter part of 2025 I took over the "management" of five projects around the town of Kasese. Their applications for support in training and mentorship had been successful, so I needed to liaise with the local partner to do this and to ensure that the funds were available. Clearly, we cannot provide the training and management remotely, so BA works with a local beekeeping training partner. In Kasese this is LIDEFO (Liberty Development Foundation) which is a non-profit, community-based organisation led by Daniel Ngangasi II. Daniel and I are able to communicate through email, WhatsApp messages and calls, noting that the mobile coverage in rural Uganda is better than at my home in Frant.

Bees Abroad receives enquiries from many groups interested in beekeeping and can only sponsor a proportion of these requests. For those near Kasese, I make a preliminary decision based on their



The Rwenzori Mountains, Uganda, in larger geographical context (Wikipedia)

completed application form and then commission Daniel for a formal assessment visit. We favour groups with a high proportion of women & youths or the disabled because they have limited opportunities otherwise. For example, BA has successfully sponsored several groups of amputees who are now beekeeping trainers and would otherwise have been socially and financially excluded.

Incubator Projects

My five "incubator" projects are Kirembe Young Mothers Beekeeping Group, Rwenzori Tuyihimbe Agro and Eco Tourism Association, Eco Woods Beekeeping Project, Mughete Women Association and Basu Banda Rural Development Association. Funding was secured from BA's fundraising activities and I send instalments as required through a banking app which Daniel receives into his account within a few seconds. The total cost for the first fifteen months is less than £1,400 for each project which provides 15 top bar hives, 10 bee suits, gloves, boots, smokers, hive tools, full training for 20 members and monthly support visits.

While I could learn a lot from my conversations with Daniel there is no substitute for the personal touch, so it was that my wife Susanne and I found ourselves on a plane in February heading to Uganda. This was followed by six hours on a bumpy road to Fort Portal where we visited some established projects, before heading to Kasese a few days later. It was fortunate that the Foreign & Commonwealth Office had removed its advice of "do not visit except in exceptional circumstances" a couple of months earlier, or we would not



An open Kenyan Top Bar hive.



Meeting.

have been able to visit four of the five projects. Kasese is close to the DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo) which is in the midst of a civil war.

The Ugandan culture places great store on developing a social network and community wealth. Personal acquisition of wealth is not normally a priority and community credit schemes are commonplace, where acquired wealth is distributed to those within the group who need it. Therefore, profits from beekeeping are spread within the community to provide medicines, education and bigger projects such as installing a village water supply. Five hives will produce enough profit to educate a child, so beekeeping is very valuable.

The profits of beekeeping come predominantly from the honey harvested and sold locally in markets and shops. LIDEFO guarantees to buy the honey and wax at a fixed price depending on quality and then sells it to supermarkets (similar to our corner shops) and to hotels. Other products include propolis which is made into a tincture and bee venom. Being very close to the equator, there is no winter or summer, but two wet and dry seasons per year. A twelve-month cycle is largely irrelevant and there are two main honey crops per year. The honey produced is dark

“forest” or “mountain” honey that is an acquired taste and quite treacly.

Each day Daniel took us to one of the five projects that were just starting. This involved some distance on tarmac, then off road for up to several miles and occasionally a trek when it became impassable. Most of the groups are based in villages of traditional mud huts with no electricity or running water. Time keeping and clocks are irrelevant so on arrival the group would start to gather and we were given pride of

place behind a small table under a tree, they would then gather around us. The leader made the introductions which was usually in English as this is the language of education. The meeting consisted of an opening prayer, the reading of a formal report, then my turn to speak before a Q&A with general discussion and a closing prayer. The report was usually printed and I was given a copy. Apparently one of the team would have travelled into town the previous day to type and print this. We then inspected their newly created apiary in which they had huge pride. On two occasions the women wrote and performed a song and dance for us, a bit lost in translation but I did recognise the odd “Mark” and “Susanne”.

As a non-beekeeper and slightly separate from Bees Abroad, Susanne was often able to relate to the women and children much easier than I could which was helpful to get the background picture.

At the base of the Western Great Rift Valley the land is incredibly fertile so everything grows, even sticks cut from branches and shoved in the ground to grow into trees and provide cover! Forage was mainly mango, avocado, banana, cotton, coffee, jack fruit, eucalyptus etc, of which there is no shortage. Two successful apiaries of 50 hives each



Welcome song and dance.



Visiting a new apiary.

may be no more than 1km apart. Farmers are discouraged from using pesticides, but this risk needs to be taken into account when siting an apiary.

We also visited an active apiary that was affected by varroa, but the options are limited as there is effectively no chemical treatment due to cost and no brood-free period. A queen was identified and one of the trainers discarded his gloves and picked 3 mites off her thorax, but I

expect that she had been significantly weakened. Interestingly they had not heard of deformed wing virus, nor was there any evidence of it. What management or treatment of the colony would you recommend? Termites and hive beetles are more common and honey badgers a nuisance.

Everything is made locally with great ingenuity. Personal protection is important because their local honey bee, *apis mellifera scutellata*, is more aggressive and defensive than our *apis mellifera mellifera*. The bee suits are made by students in the local tailoring college as part of their training. They are very similar to our full suits but come at a cost to BA of about £27 each. Similarly, I watched a smoker being made from a sheet of metal roofing, bed spring and recycled fabric with no welding or gluing, just skilful metal work. The [rather cool] chap in the photo was able to make about 5 smokers a day, sitting in the shade of a tree hammering the metal around a section of train rail and scaffolding pole. I bought this one and it's indistinguishable from ours in quality, but cheaper.

Tape measures and rulers are largely ignored, so there's no "measure twice, cut once" adage. If something needs to be made then a suitable length stick is provided which seems to work very well. Hives are

rough and ready and made to a template, with the frames being a top bar and a starter wooden strip beneath (no wax). They are placed off the ground on stands made from whatever is available, often in oil filled cans to deter termites. LIDEFO makes the hives to order in their workshop at a cost of about £17 each.

Hives are colonised naturally although made more homely by smearing beeswax inside and some lemon grass scent. Swarm control is non-existent and the colonies are not managed as we would understand it. It is expected that 80% of the hives would be colonised within a couple of months, although I did see one that took 3 days.

We are very grateful to Daniel and his wife, Grace, for being excellent hosts and giving us such an insight into life in Uganda, a truly beautiful country with motivated, hospitable people.

If anyone is interested in volunteering or raising money for Bees Abroad do contact me (mark_wilcox@beesabroad.org.uk). Volunteers are just that, in that we give our time and self-fund any travel. There are only 2-3 paid whole time equivalents in BA and this means that the majority of money donated goes directly to the projects, unlike similar UK based organisations. I'll bring some honey to taste and the smoker to our AGM in the autumn.



Home made smokers.



Woodshop.

The HWBKA Apiary Co-operative and EFB

By Paul Lindström

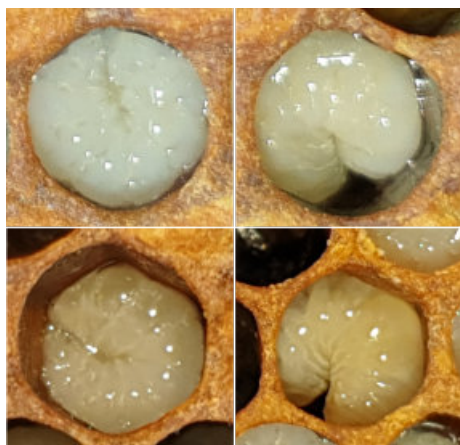
This season the association apiary is run in a new way. We have an Apiary Manager (that's me) and an acting Assistant Apiary Manager (that is Carlton Waghorn) but then we also have a group of helpers that adopt some hives, and two of those members can put two of their own colonies in the Horsted Green Park apiary, situated inside the Horsted Green Park recreation grounds outside Uckfield.

We have decided to reduce the amount of colonies at Horsted. According to the contract we have with the Wealden Council we can have

up to 12 colonies, including nucs and apideas, but we really don't need that many for teaching purposes. So the goal is to go into Winter with 6 strong colonies. Any surplus colonies from splits etc will be sold to members when available.

The Co-operative consist of me and Carlton and a jolly team of helpers – a mix of experienced beekeepers and beginners. They are; Steve Adams, Cheryl Appleby, Jo Crawford, Fiona McKinna, Kev Mulligan, Mark Salmon, Darren Stewart, Graham Stuart, Tim Wadham, Matt Weeks and Briony Young.

At inspections it's not necessary to always include the whole group, but with such a large pool of willing helpers we are normally 4-6 people doing an inspection and other tasks at the apiary. It can be grass (and docks and thistles) trimming, cleaning hives and equipment, or building brood-and/or super frames etc. It's so nice to do these tasks together and it's much quicker than doing it alone or being perhaps only two people. At the moment it's only Carlton who has his own colony at Horsted, with Graham Stuart having the option to add up to two colonies of his own to the apiary.



Healthy larva (top left) compared to yellowing EFB larvae. The EFB infected larvae no longer sit in their cells in a healthy 'C' shape and lose their plump segmented appearance. Some become twisted in their cells and others have the appearance of looking melted down.



The gut of an infected larva may be visible through its translucent body wall. It has a creamy colour caused by the mass of bacteria living within it. This image shows some yellow looking larvae (black arrows) next to normal pearly-white larvae; these larvae have discoloured slightly and were not sitting neatly in their cells. Image courtesy of Meg Seymour



Early on, the larval gut will begin to fill with bacteria. The black arrow in this image shows a small creamy mass in the larval gut; this is the bacterial mass. As the bacteria multiply, this mass expands and may take up most of the gut. Image courtesy of Meg Seymour.



After dying, the larval remains will turn brown. Sometimes infected larvae die after they are sealed. When this happens, there may be perforated cell cappings, where the nurse bees have detected the disease and investigate.

Challenge – EFB in our area

In June we were alerted that the Horsted Green Park apiary was inside an area of 3 km from where an outbreak of EFB (European Foul Brood) had been reported. We took immediate action and read up on symptoms and possible cause of action. A full inspection took place within days of the alarm. Fortunately there were no signs of EFB. Since then we do weekly inspections, despite Red Level heat wave warnings, and (touch wood) no EFB has been detected this far.

You will have seen the email from Peter Halford with the alert about EFB I hope, and have had a chance to



As dead larvae decompose further, they dry out and turn into a brown scale, which has a rubbery consistency, and can be easily removed from the cell. When there is a heavy infection with EFB, the brood pattern will become patchy and erratic as dead brood is removed by the nurse bees.

read up on this and take action in your own apiary.

I will repeat some of the information from that email, and the advice from Helen Hadley – a member of HWBKA and one of our local Bee inspectors. This is what Helen wrote to us:

– There have been a few cases of EFB which have popped up within the High Weald association area. Please be extra vigilant during inspections and take photos of brood that you think looks infected and report. If members are collecting swarms, please quarantine.

If you spot anything suspicious or need any support from a disease perspective, please do not hesitate to

get in touch with our local bee inspectors on the details below:

Daniel Morgan

Mobile: 07500 954 390

email daniel.morgan@apha.gov.uk

Helen Hadley

Mobile: 07871 320 316

email: helen.hadley@apha.gov.uk

I would also like to add that its

important as beekeepers to familiarise ourselves with the symptoms of brood diseases, but also more importantly – what normal healthy brood look like. I have added some links to resources which can assist with this and attached some helpful leaflets.

[Common brood disorders » APHA - National Bee Unit - BeeBase](#)

[Foulbrood » APHA - National Bee Unit - BeeBase](#)

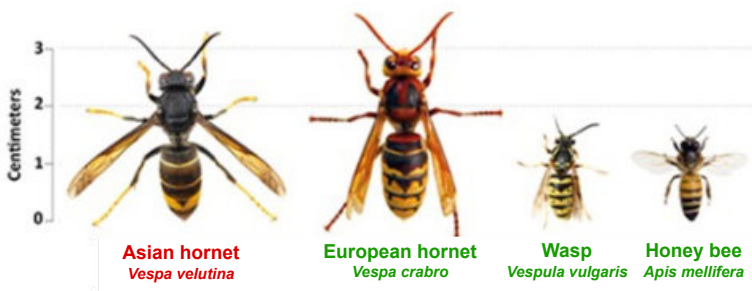
[Home » APHA - National Bee Unit - BeeBase](#)

[Checking Colonies for Disease - Barnsley Beekeepers](#)

Let's hope that we can keep our apiary free from EFB and other diseases and have another honey harvest – we already made a smaller extraction in late May, but then the nectar flow dropped off a bit. There are clear signs that the nectar flow has picked up again, and I'm quite certain we can make another extraction in early August.



Think you've seen an Asian hornet? Report it!



Report through the Asian hornet Watch app on your smartphone or at:

<https://catch.asianhornetalert.org.uk/>

or at:

www.bit.ly/asianhornetreport

The Bees in the Chimney – part 3

By Laurel Lindström

"Do you know what you're doing?"

The beekeeper looked at her with raised eyebrows and tried to ignore how unexpectedly sexy she looked in a beesuit. The tight gathering at the waist; a makeshift belt had hanging from it a hive tool, a bee brush and a rag. The belt was a length of thick string with loops she'd fashioned into it. Penny didn't look up but answered, "no, not really, but I thought it time to try. I've watched you so often." The beehive at the bottom of Penny's garden had been in place for some weeks now, ever since the swarm had arrived in her chimney and she'd had the local bee wrangler come to deal with them. She hadn't expected someone quite so tall and wiry and she found Mr Westerham a little intimidating.

The plan had been that once settled the bees would be moved elsewhere, say to his house or to a local apiary. But he'd kept coming to check on them and unawares she'd found random reasons why they should stay a little longer. And here they were. And here he was too. Again. She'd worried about the weather at one point, but he never did get to the bottom of what the weather had to do with it. Bees are bees. They go with whatever the weather is, wherever they are.

Sweating slightly, she was shoving the thin metal edge of the hive tool under the hive roof to get it loose enough to remove. She'd seen him do this many times. From afar it hadn't looked that hard. Despite her new, super impenetrable beesuit she was less confident than she had expected. She prodded cautiously at the propolis seal the bees had worked into every possible gap. It was much harder to break than she'd expected. Her special gloves were a bit too big and their rubberised layer meant her fingers couldn't move properly. She shoved a little harder with the hive tool and heard the cracking sound of propolis coming away from the two surfaces it was gluing together. She loosened the hive's roof and with a



beaming smile dropped her hive tool and grasped the roof's edges with both hands and lifted it.

"Oh," she said breathless, stepping from foot to foot, looking about her, her mind a blank as to what should happen next. He reached over and took the roof from her, leaning into her warmth and sensing her worry. He leant the roof against the hive stand and stepped back, saying "now you've got to do the same with the crown board, but that's much easier." And he turned and headed back to his car. "Yes" she said, "the crown board," watching him move up the garden on long lean strides. She pried off the thin layer of wood sitting between the roof and the bees, and less stressed put it on the ground against the roof.

She was held in the breath of thousands of honey bees, their propolis, honey, pollen a complex mingling of summer intoxications. Now in his beesuit Mr Westerham was back, peering over her shoulder into the hive. The scent of him reached slowly into her senses. In the unexpected light the bees were momentarily agitated and their sound rose loud and a little angry before settling slowly back to a steady hum. "What next?" she said as he drew in closer, taking her hive tool in hand to reach for the first of the several frames hanging in the top box of the hive. As he reached over she felt herself pulled slightly closer to him as the tethered tool reached top stretch. She felt herself breathe in a drowsing blend, at once exhilarating

and soporific. His hand on hers guided the hive tool to loosen the frame as he whispered "you take one side and I'll get the other." The clumsy gloves didn't help, but together they lifted a small wooden rectangle, heavy with summer, heavy with honey and she let out a small gasp amazed at what she was sharing. Standing still, holding a frame full of honey and watching the bees calm and busy, shaping their spaces for winter stores and for new bees. He too was held still in a space he didn't quite recognise, beekeeper or not. 

The previous two parts of this series has been published earlier in *The Apiarist*; Part 1 in the July issue of 2023, Part 2 in the July issue of 2024. You can find previous issues of *The Apiarist* [here](#).

If you want to read more of Laurel's work, short stories and blog posts, then go to her web site at <https://laurellindstrom.org/>. There you will also find her debut novel *The Craftsman*.

Dates for your calendar

Saturday 4th July 10:00-13:00

HWBKA Training Session – Bee

“Safari” – Note: this has been cancelled because of the outbreak of EFB in our area.

Saturday 4th July

[Langton Green Fete](#)

Venue: Langton Green

Saturday 18th July 10:00-12:00

HWBKA Training Session – Varroa and YLH control

Sign up on our [Events calendar](#).

Venue: Horsted Green park Apiary

12:00-14:00

Session 2 – Hive building

Sign up on our [Events calendar](#).

Venue: Horsted Green park Apiary

Wednesday 29th July 19:00-21:30

Bee Banter

Venue: The Rose & Crown, Mayfield, in the Function Room, Fletching Street TN20 6TE

Saturday 8th August

[Weald on the Field](#)

Venue: Luxford Field, Uckfield

Saturday 15th August 10:00-14:00

HWBKA Training Session – Honey Extraction

Sign up on our [Events calendar](#).

Saturday 12th September 10:00-12:00

HWBKA Training Session – Preparing Hives for Winter

Sign up on our [Events calendar](#).

22nd, 23rd & 24th October

[National Honey Show](#)

Venue: Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey

Saturday 14th November

BBKA Modules – Autumn Exams

Sign up by contacting our Membership Secretary [Peter Halford](#)

More events might be listed [on our web site](#) – check it regularly for the latest updates.



Rent a de-capping tool from HWBKA

The association has a nifty de-capping tool available for rent.

It's a bit of a faff to clean, but if you have several supers to extract it's worth the while. We used it at the HWBKA big honey extraction in 2025 and it saved a lot of time. It comes with a manual and includes instructions on how to clean it properly.

You can rent it two days at a time for £10 for two days (and a £20 Deposit).

Included in the rent is the tray to catch the honey and de-capped wax. Actually; it cut into the capped honey rather than de-capping it, so there is less wax lost from the frames than when doing a traditional de-capping with a knife or de-capping fork.



Note that the deposit will be forfeit if returned late, damaged or dirty. Severe damage/repairs will be charged at cost.

The de-capping tool is stored by Paul Lindström in Southover (outside Burwash).

Bookings and inquiries through Paul, see contact info below. Deposit by cash but final payment paid directly into the HWBKA bank account (same as when paying your membership fee etc).

For info, availability and booking call or text mobile number 07833-088 766.

Or email: the.hwbka+apiarist@gmail.com • Address: The Clock Tower, Southover, Spring Lane, Burwash, TN19 7JB



HWBKA Committee 2025-2026

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Peter Halford the.hwbka+membership@gmail.com

Acting web master: Peter Coxon
the.hwbka+webmaster@gmail.com

Committee members: Liz Missen and Simon Kipping

Other useful contacts – National Bee Unit inspectors:

Local Bee Inspectors:

Daniel Morgan (Mobile: 07500 95 43 90, email daniel.morgan@apha.gov.uk)

Helen Hadley (Mobile: 07871 320 316, email: helen.hadley@apha.gov.uk)

For more Bee Inspectors see the National Bee Unit [web site](#).

Rent a honey extractor from HWBKA



*The newer SAF Natura
Tangential 4-frame extractor*

The association has two extractors available for rent. One newer SAF NATURA tangential 4-frames extractor and one older tangential 3-frame extractor (pictured right), Kindly donated by Don Bastick.

You can rent them two days at a time. The newer 4-frame tangential cost £10 for two days (and a £20 Deposit) and the older 3-frames tangential extractor cost £5 for two days (and a £10 deposit).

Included in the rent is a honey bucket, a sieve and an uncapping fork, if required + instructions for use.

Note that the deposit will be forfeit if returned late, damaged or dirty. Severe damage/repairs will be charged at cost.

PS. The older 6-frame extractor is not available at the moment since it is in need of a bigger repair requiring rare spare parts.



*The older tangential 3-frame
extractor*

The older 3-frames extractor is stored by Paul Lindström in Southover (outside Burwash).

The newer 4-frame SAF Natura is stored by Lynne Curtis at Lynne's Organic Farm (just outside Crowborough).

All bookings and inquiries through Paul, see contact info below. Deposit by cash but final payment paid directly into the HWBKA bank account (same as when paying your membership fee etc).

For info, availability and booking call or text mobile number 07833-088 766.

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